

## Coins

# On the EF to AG scale, how does your collection rate?

By Roger Boye

PERHAPS the only "science" in coin collecting is grading or determining the condition of a coin.

The condition of a coin, which has a tremendous influence on its value, varies from uncirculated to about good, based on the grading system used by most collectors and dealers. An uncir-

culated coin is almost always worth three or more times the value of the coin of the same date and mint which has been in circulation. And the more wear a coin shows from being in circulation, the lower its value.

The two "Bibles" of coin grading are "A Guide to the Grading of United States Coins" by Martin R. Brown and John W. Dunn and

"Photograde" by James F. Ruddy.

Coins which have circulated are generally graded with the following designations:

- Extremely fine [EF or XF]: Coins showing only the slightest wear.

- Very fine [VF]: Coins generally sharp, with some wear on the high points of the design.

- Fine [F]: Coins showing moderate wear, with all

the high points worn.

- Very good [VG]: Coins showing much wear, but all lettering and date are clear.

- Good [G]: Coins with considerable wear, but the date, mint mark, and design are readily identified. Rim may begin to wear into the lettering.

- Almost good [AG]: Badly worn coin, but date and mint are identified. Coins in AG are usually not

collected unless the date and mint are extremely rare, or unless the coin is being saved for its silver content.

Another variety is a proof coin. [Proof refers to the production method.] A proof coin is specially made at the Mint with carefully selected dies which are cleaned and polished frequently during the production process.

The coin blank is handfed

into the coin press and stamped twice to bring out the finest details. Proof coins are individually inspected at the Mint, have a mirrorlike appearance, and sell for more [sometimes much more] than uncirculated coins of the same date.

Currently, proof coins are made at the San Francisco Mint; prior to 1965, proof coins were made at the Philadelphia Mint.